

Los Angeles Times

WEDNESDAY MORNING, AUG. 18, 1971

F Part II-2

THE PUBLIC SPEAKS OUT

Younger Comments on Sirhan Trial Theories

In recent months, questions have been raised concerning all aspects of the Sirhan case by a variety of people for a variety of motives.

When, as district attorney of Los Angeles County, I prosecuted Sirhan, we knew, and I so stated on numerous occasions that some day someone would raise questions concerning the manner of death and the parties responsible.

It was inevitable that the conspiracy theory would be suggested—that makes a better story.

Even though I knew that some persons, whose motives might or might not be apparent, would never allow the case to be put to rest, we took all reasonable means to insure that the true story was developed and perpetuated.

However, in recent months that which we predicted has occurred, and I am still frequently asked whether there were inconsistencies in the testimony at the Sirhan trial. My answer: Yes, definitely there were. When 65 witnesses testify concerning any incident, I am not disturbed concerning minor inconsistencies in the testimony. I would be concerned if all 65 witnesses testified in precisely the same manner.

None individuals testifying to an event which they observed could not possibly see, hear and recall the event in the exact same way. Inconsistencies of a minor nature tend to happen to testimony of witnesses who do not know each other well enough to be considered reliable. The testimony of the witnesses were considered and evaluated by the jury.

It should be remembered that the investigation following the assassination of Robert F. Kennedy on June 5, 1968 by the Los Angeles Police Department and other cooperating departments, including the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office, the FBI and other agencies, was one of the most complete, if not the most complete, criminal investigations ever conducted by a law enforcement agency in the United States.

It was determined that all possible information would be obtained and be made available to the public at a time when the constitutional rights of the defendant could not be jeopardized by the attendant publicity.

More than 4,000 witnesses were interviewed. Sixty-five witnesses were called by the district attorney of Los Angeles County to testify during the course of the trial. At the conclusion of the case, reports covering interviews with those witnesses who had not been called to testify by either party, comprising 109 in all, were filed with the Superior Court as exhibits and became a matter of public record.

At the request of defense counsel, duplicates of more than 150 files containing interviews of potential witnesses were delivered on pretrial discovery motions. Included among these files were recorded interviews of more than 70 persons who were deemed to have observed the defendant at some time during the planning of, or just prior to, the killing of June 5 at the Ambassador Hotel.

EVELLE J. YOUNGER
Attorney General
Sacramento